

THE HARMONIOUS LIFE. MacDONALD

THE HARMONIOUS LIFE



❁ By A. M. MacDONALD ❁



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The Harmonious Life

BY

A. M. MacDONALD

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FOREWORD

The addresses constituting this little volume were delivered by Mr. MacDonald at the meeting of the Baptist Union of Western Canada, held at Moose Jaw, Sask., November 11-15, 1909. They so captivated the audiences present that it was determined to print them in such a form that they could enter upon a larger mission. Mr. MacDonald reluctantly consented to thus sending them forth; but we believe that this exposition of "The Harmonious Life" will be helpful and inspiring to every reader, and a healthful corrective to much of the one-sided and immature thinking of our day. We, therefore, are glad of the privilege of commending to all readers the

Foreword

following pages. The thought contained therein has been an inspiration to all who were privileged to hear it.

A. A. SHAW.

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PART I.

Keeping the Life in Tune

The Harmonious Life.

PART I.

Keeping the Life in Tune.

CHAPTER I.

THE GREAT CHORUS.

It was purposed in the heart of God that all created things should blend their music in a harmonious song, so that round His throne there would circle the sublime chorus of harp and voice, sea and sky, waving fields and swaying forests and all the sounds of heaven and earth in sweetest melody. Professor Albertson, with his receiving machine, says it is a demonstratable fact that the nearest planets and farthest stars each give forth a sound. This in two ways—first, by the motion of

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the stars through space ; and, second, by their inherent and reflected light. The spheres communicate motion to the ether, as does also the light, which, together, produce sweetest music—the music of the stars. The fact is, as an eminent divine has well said: “We are all deaf, or we should understand that the whole universe is but one great musical instrument ; the stars of night only the ivory keys on which God’s fingers play the music of the spheres.” The inspired poet, believing that all nature could express itself in music, called upon the heavens to rejoice, the earth to be glad, the mountains and the fields to add their tribute of praise. The songsters of the woodlands and the meadows vie with the feathered songsters of the sky in their effort to carol sweetest music. Men of all nations comprise the human part of this great chorus. Each individual life should be a song of praise to the Eternal.

Now, the gift of song is one of the noblest endowments bestowed

The Great Chorus

upon men. To only a few in each generation is the poet's pen or the musician's art given. We are not all gifted to weave sweet thoughts into rhythmic verse to charm the souls of men, but we can make our life a song if we will. Milton says that he who hopes to write well in laudable things ought himself to be a true poem—that is, a composition of the best and noblest things. We will only be able to sing songs that will be music in God's ears when our lives have become songs in their sweetness and beauty.

If life is to be a song, it must be kept in tune. Every now and then the piano tuner comes to your home, goes over all the strings of your instrument, keying them up so that when the music is rendered there will be no discords. Life has many more strings than a piano, and they much more easily get out of tune. Constant vigilance is necessary that they may be kept to concert pitch.

CHAPTER II.

LIFE DULLED BY ITS COMMON ACTIVITIES.

The daily activities of life will dull its tune, just as the constant striking of the strings of the piano lengthens them. Our common experiences have an exhausting effect. We have our daily cares, difficulties, burdens, and anxieties. The music of life is naturally not so sweet in the evening as it was in the morning. Night has a gracious ministration in renewing our vitality so that we are ready each new day for its new activities. The music of life is much more dependent upon our physical condition than we are apt to imagine. It is much easier to be sweet and cheerful when we are bright and vigorous than when we are jaded and weary.

No one has yet discovered the method of perpetual motion. Were

Life Dulled by its Common Activities

such a method to be found there would be one insuperable difficulty to its use—namely, the wear of material. The only thing that will prevent wear is rest. Wise work and wise rest are the indispensable factors in the solution of the problem of accomplishment in this world. If you work anything—hand, brain, tool, instrument—all the time, work will wear it out. If you rest anything—hand, brain, tool, instrument—all the time, rest will rust it out. Your body is a marvellous instrument, meant for toil. Yes, God crowns work. The true nobility is not the nobility of blood, but the nobility of toil. But the body cannot always toil. Set it at perpetual service of one sort and it goes to pieces. Every night sleep must knit up the ravelled sleeve of its energies, and every seventh day the working world must rest.

But the body is not all. We are made for communion with God. We need also to come into His presence at the end of the day to be

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spiritually renewed. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." Given work to be done on the one hand and power on the other, the great problem is to effect a junction between the two. This is the great difficulty with tidal power. There is enough power in the rising and falling of the tides to light all our cities and drive all our machinery, cook all our food, heat all our homes—in fact, to do the work of the world. But no one has yet found a method of storing that energy and delivering it as a marketable commodity to the world. Were such a method to be discovered, the sea would work for us night and day, without weariness. It matters little how much power you may be able to generate in the boiler of a locomotive if you have no way of harnessing it to the coaches that stand idly upon the track. The great problem is how to apply the power to the work. Now it is the same problem that has to be solved in the spiritual

Life Dulled by its Common Activities

realm. From the day of Pentecost, power has been everywhere accessible to man as a working force. Why, then, do men so often stand helpless before the great problems of sin and shame, even as did the disciples of the earlier time, to whom Christ said: "This kind cometh not out but by prayer and fasting." Upon every power God has set a price. The athlete who climbs high mountains, swims broad rivers, or runs great distances with ease, will tell you how scrupulously he must pay the price demanded for the privilege of keeping in form. The scholar who has gained the power of solving great problems, illuminating great questions, or making great generalizations, will remind you that the way to the temple of knowledge lies over the graves of many who have willingly sacrificed their lives in pushing their investigations into truth. The men who hold the reins of state or empire will tell you how impossible it is to become centres of radiant

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force in society unless you are prepared to pay the price. Even the winds and the rivers that seem so free, demand a certain toll of time and ingenuity before they will yield themselves as ready servants.

Here the law of the natural world is also the law of the spiritual. God does not bestow spiritual power at haphazard, but upon those who fulfil certain conditions. What was the condition violated at the foot of Hermon, so that the disciples were humiliated in defeat, but fulfilled in the upper room, so that they were clothed with irresistible power? The answer may be given in the words of Christ: "This kind cometh not out but by prayer and fasting," or in the words of the prophet: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength."

CHAPTER III.

LIFE DWARFED BY PERSISTENT INACTIVITY.

If the activities of life destroy its tone, much more will persistent inactivity. It is a law of nature that a power not used wastes and at length dies out. A great pianist said that if he missed his practice for three days the public would know it; if for two days his friends would be aware of it; if for one day he himself would be conscious of it. If we would keep our lives in tune we must not allow our powers to be unused.

Activity is necessary to the health of the body. Burton has forcefully said: "As ferns grow in untilled grounds, and all manner of weeds, so do gross humors in an idle body. A horse in a stable that never travels, a hawk in a mew that seldom flies, are both subject to dis-

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eases which left to themselves, are most free from any such incumbrances. An idle dog will be mangy, and how can an idle person think to escape?" Those who are not driven by the spur of physical necessity have to invent interests, occupations, recreations and all manner of substitutes for work in order to save themselves from physical deterioration.

Activity is equally essential to health of mind. The most unhappy lives are idle ones. "Life would be tolerable but for its pleasures," is a cynical French saying the truth of which is amply borne out in the ennui of many a jaded self-seeker. Louis XIII. would sometimes take one of his courtiers to a window and say, "Monsieur, let us weary ourselves together." When asked about his health he would say: "Bad, I am bored." There is no one more to be pitied than the man who tries to live without work. He never feels the luxury of a frame alive with energy. He never feels

Life Dwarfed by Persistent Inactivity

his pulse beat with a gladder bound as he sees some great difficulty with which he grappled vanish. His eye never kindles with enthusiasm as he sees some great institution for which he struggled succeed. But activity is even more a necessity to spiritual tone and character. Many a sullen mood, an evil vapor, a querulous temper would disappear through contact with the realities of life. Who does not shudder to think of the shameful sins and follies bred in a society given over to pleasure. The spur of poverty is by no means an evil. If it has sometimes been a painful necessity, it has more frequently been a blessed necessity. Turner expressed a deep truth when to the nobleman, who was somewhat of an amateur painter, he said: "My Lord, you only need poverty to make you an excellent painter."

Coleridge, in his rhyme of the "Ancient Mariner," tells us how

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Down dropped the breeze, the sails
dropped down,

'Twas sad as sad could be,
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath, nor motion,
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

The very deep did rot, O Christ,
That ever this should be;
Yea slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon a slimy sea.

About, about in reel and rout,
The death fires danced at night,
The water like witches' oils,
Burnt green and blue and white.

Stagnation is a death-breeder always and everywhere. It is the stagnant well or pool that exhales miasmatic influences; and it is the stagnant life that breeds the baser sins. Running water purifies itself, and the flow of life sweetens it.

CHAPTER IV.

LIFE STRAINED BY A TOO INTENSE ACTIVITY.

The tone of life is often impaired by the too intense and worry-producing activities to which we give ourselves. We seem to-day to have lost the habit of taking time so that we become querulous of taste, irritable of temper and petulant of manner. The children waken in the morning, bolt their breakfasts, rush to school, hurry home again to get at their lessons. Our busy wives and mothers keep their books of engagements. Some of them would be humiliated if they had a full evening to spend at home. They seem to have forgotten that the Master who commended Mary for her habits of contemplation, took time for rest and prayer. Our men are so busy keeping engagements with each other that they have no time to

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keep their engagements with God. There are many things that contribute to the haste of our lives. Our fathers, upon coming to this new continent, had to subdue the forests, tame the wilderness, uncover mines, lay the foundations for homes, schools and churches. They had to build and perfect our great systems of commerce and transportation. Rising up early in the morning and toiling on into the night, they labored until work was ingrained into the very marrow of our bones.

Our climate is stimulating. Those who live in sunny, southern climates find them sedative. They help to relax the muscle and ease the tension of the brain. Our northern climate acts like new wine upon the blood.

The popular teaching of the strenuous life adds something to the eager haste with which men pursue their labors. The youth of to-day is told to aspire. He is addressed thus: "Would you rather be a clod

Life Strained by a Too Intense Activity

than an eagle? Do you want to soar or do you want to squirm? Will you remain in the herd and be like dumb driven cattle; or will you assert your independence? List your assets. You have hands to lift, feet to run, eyes to see, a brain to think and days crowded with limitless opportunities. What the human hand has wrought, the hand can still achieve. Your success depends on you. You may go through life an old mud-scow lashed to a hired propeller, floundering heavily through a slow schedule and in imminent danger of squalls; or like the magnificent ocean liner that in the face of wind and billow carries its cargo into port. Be, aspire, do, endeavor."

Perhaps nothing more frequently puts life out of tune than worry. Worry, said one, is the rust that eats away the keen edge of character. Worry, said another, is the moth that consumes the fabric of manhood. Jefferson said: "We spend much time in worrying over diffi-

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culties that never come." You remember the familiar story of the boy who left a home in the Old Country to seek his fortune in the New World. After a few years, as the result of energy and the many opportunities afforded, he found himself a man of means. Returning to the Old Country he endeavored to secure some knowledge as to his ancestors. A keeper of an institution there told him that his parents died of consumption. The man returned to worry, worry, worry, until he contracted a disease which was wholly foreign to his nature and, as was afterwards shown, wholly foreign to his ancestors.

Amidst its bushel of chaff, Christian Science contains a few kernels of wheat. Scholars laugh at its philosophy and ridicule its science, but it is built upon the great fundamental truths, namely, "Worry is sin. No evil can befall a good man," and what are these but liberal interpretations of the true biblical statements: "Cast all your care upon

Life Strained by a Too Intense Activity

Him. He careth for you, and all things work together for good to them that love Him." We must bring our lives under the touch and inspiration of the Master Musician Himself. It will then be as Mr. Richardson has said: "As when to some old organ, upon whose keys for years men had been laying their clumsy fingers and beating out their imperfect music, there should come the master mind who built it. In an instant the organ's sleeping soul should leap to life and sing for joy as it recognized its maker. How the men might marvel as they listened to the music filling all the house with melody. How they might say to one another: 'It is the same instrument we have always known.' Yes, the same instrument, but obedient once more to the master's touch."

CHAPTER V.

LIFE IN THE MASTER'S PRESENCE.

A rare jewel is brought suddenly from the darkness to the light. Once you had almost to strain your eyes to catch the dim outline of its shape, but now you can see deep down into its very heart, and out of its depths come flashing flakes of light and glowing gleams of color that surpass the sunrise in their splendour. In like fashion, coming thus into the light of the Master's presence, life's darkness is dispelled and its inner beauty and symmetry stand revealed. We believe this, but how few of us put ourselves consciously and without reserve under the inspiration of His presence. We are like the boat drawn high and dry upon the beach, singing the glory of the waves, but never daring to launch forth upon their crests. We are like the poet

Life in the Master's Presence

chanting the glories of the sunshine,
but voluntarily living in a dungeon.
Oh, be sure of this, it is all wrong.
The strings of our lives will only be
played without discord when touched
by the Master's hand.

PART II.

The Full Life Note

PART II.

The Full Life Note.

CHAPTER I.

THE PERFECT HERO.

A musician of national reputation has said that no man could sound a perfect note, unless his body had reached its highest development, his vocal chords were perfect and his respiration faultless; unless his intellect were so trained that it could conceive the perfect note and by its supreme command call all his physical powers into activity for its production, and unless within him there throbs a heart so warm that it will save his note from becoming metallic. This will remind you of Prof. Huxley's more general definition of education—"That man, I think, has had a liberal education who has been so trained in his youth that his

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body is the ready servant of his will and does with ease and pleasure all the work that as a mechanism it is capable of doing; whose intellect is a clear, cold, logic engine, with all its parts of equal strength and in perfect working order, ready like a steam engine to be turned to any kind of work, and spin the gossamers as well as forge the anchors of the mind; whose mind is stored with knowledge of the great and fundamental truths of nature and of the laws of her operation. One who (no stunted ascetic) is full of life and fire, whose passions are the servant of a tender conscience; who has learned to love all beauty whether of nature or art, and hate all vileness and respect others as himself." According to Professor Huxley, the scholar is one who has his body, mind and spirit symmetrically developed. This is almost a universal conception. One of the greatest of English poets was Lord Tennyson. Perhaps his greatest poem is the "Idylls of the King." You will

The Perfect Hero

remember that among the knights whose stories are there told, King Arthur is always first. He was strong. He met Balin in mortal combat and overthrew him. He was wise. He gave his days and nights to high thinking. He was good. Wherever you see him, whether in the palace, hall or on the battle field, he wears the white flower of a blameless life. Strong in body, strong in mind and strong in spirit, he was Lord Tennyson's ideal of a perfect hero. A Frenchman has written what is probably the greatest of all novels. Jean Valjean is better known than Hamlet, and infinitely more worth knowing. He, too, was strong. Single handed he lifted a laden cart from off the body of a fallen hero. He was wise. Outside of the inspired Word there is no wiser philosophy of life than this old man came to know. He was good. Triumphant over taint of blood and temptation in life, he became the intimate friend of God. Strong in body, strong in mind and

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strong in spirit, he is Victor Hugo's ideal of a perfect hero. If the Christian is to sing well his life song, his threefold life must be symmetrically developed.

CHAPTER II.

THE PHYSICAL AS RELATED TO THE MENTAL AND SPIRITUAL.

A few years ago Dr. Latson wrote a series of articles for *Success Magazine*. In them he divided the world into two great classes, the strong and the weak, those who command and those who obey. The leaders are the few, the great ones of the ages. The followers are many, the nameless unnumbered hordes. Cromwell, the uncouth butcher who drove a weakling from the throne; Luther, the low-born priest who dared to defy earth's most powerful potentate; Napoleon, Beecher, Gladstone, Grant, Lincoln, those men were leaders, and they differed in almost every important respect. Washington was a large man; Napoleon was small, Gladstone was a marvel of intellectual ability, Cromwell knew only a great fiery emotion. Some

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great leaders have been good men and some have been bad, but this one thing they all possessed in common, namely, a great nervous vitality. To-day in active life, professional or commercial, the same thing holds good. What is the essential characteristic of the men who achieve success in trade, in professions, in politics? Is it intellect? Is it refinement? Is it morality? Men without intellect have swayed great multitudes. Men without refinement have built up great institutions. Men without morality have forced their way to the front ranks of nations. But they have all possessed those powers of application and endurance which are the result of great nervous vitality. The names of Robert Hall and John Calvin and a score of others may suggest themselves as exceptions. Great souls have dwelt in frail tenements. They are the exceptions that prove the rule.

We are learning the truth of this in education. We are beginning to

The Physical : Mental and Spiritual

see that a man must be a good animal before the best of anything else is possible. The keenest brain needs a foundation of physical health to do its work.

But the relation of the physical goes deeper than that. It has to do with morals. Many of the sins of temper, that bring as much pain to others as well as yourself, are the result of physical dyspepsia or unstrung nerves. "The jaundiced eye sees everything in its own hue." Much of Carlyle's philosophy and many of his judgments found their roots in his dyspepsia. There is a close affinity between the laws of health and the laws of morality. A man thinks well and loves well and prays well because of the clear flowing of rich blood in his veins.

Dr. Vance, in his *Study of Habit*, calls attention to the closeness of this relationship. "You are not your body," he says, "but you are anchored there. How shall you get out? Suppose there were no openings there, your body would be a dun-

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geon and your soul a prisoner in solitary confinement. But a window opens as God builds the eye in the human body. Another window opens and there is an ear. A doorway is made and there is touch. Another door and there is taste. A verandah is built around the body and there is the sense of smell. These five senses bring the soul into contact with so much of the world as we know." Dr. Vance proceeds to point out that as you enter the palace of the body you find that the soul is not only anchored to the body, it is literally immeshed there. A network of nerves and nerve centres connects every part of the body with the brain, and the brain with every part of the body. You see an ugly object, up goes your hand in self defence, a message has been flashed from the eye to the brain and from the brain to the hand. The first time the circuit is made, it may be with difficulty and awkwardness. The second time it will be easier. "It is like blazing a path through

The Physical: Mental and Spiritual

the forest, as the circuit plows its way through the body time after time the way becomes a highway. Directly the body is covered with trunk lines running out and into central stations and along which through trains have the right of way." It is thus that lust plows its way in the body. Habitual tippling makes a drunkard.

CHAPTER III.

THE MENTAL AS RELATED TO THE PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL.

A few years ago there died in Bulgaria, a woman thirty years of age. She thought as a mature woman; she spoke as a mature woman; but she had the body of a six months' baby. For thirty years she slept in a cradle. So there are everywhere, dwarfed bodies with giant intellects, and, on the contrary, there are everywhere giant bodies with dwarfed intellects. But the best living demands a symmetrical development of these two. As nothing determines character like the company we keep, so nothing foretells futurity like the thoughts we think. It is said of John Keats that his face was the face of one who had seen a vision. So long had the inner eye been fixed upon beauty that not only did his

The Mental: Physical and Spiritual

soul take on the loveliness of what he contemplated, but the very lines of the poet's face were chiselled by those sculptors called thoughts and ideals. The girl's long love of the thrush's song, her tender care of her favored flowers had saturated her own face with sweetness until Wordsworth speaks of her beauty as born of murmuring sound. The deterioration of Hawthorne's Chillingworth began through evil thinking when face and physique were fully matured. In middle life he suffered a greivous wrong. Not knowing the identity of his enemy, his physician came to suspect his friend. By skilful questions he digged into Demmsdale's heart. When suspicion had strengthened into certainty, enmity became hatred. Then for two years Chillingworth tortured his victim. Soon the face, once so gentle and just, took on an aspect sinister and malign, children feared him, men shivered in his presence, they knew not why. Unholy thoughts and dark designs register

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themselves in the physical life of man.

Our thinking also determines character. He whose ideals are clean, sincere, kindly and earnest will become in character what he seeks. The sunshine that kissed the rosebud yesterday has made it a different flower to-day. So the kind and helpful thought puts the tracery of its greatness on the soul and leaves the spirit higher up in the table lands of character, where the air is clean and the sky is clear.

Sometimes a life outwardly fair and reputed upright, goes down in sudden moral collapse. The public is perplexed to explain so complete a fall from virtue's path. The explanation may often be found in a mind that has surrendered itself to secret feasting on the pleasures of immorality. Unholy thoughts drive toward an unholy life as irresistibly as the catapult projects its missile or the cannon hurls its conquering shot.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SPIRIT OF A MAN.

A man, an unbeliever, went to a celebrated minister and said: "I know you are a man full of common sense. I have read your sermons, and I like them. I believe you will give me a straightforward answer. Do you believe a man has a soul? The minister said: "Yes, I do." "Well," said the man "that is a most extraordinary thing for a man of your ability to think. If you come with me to the Kensington Museum, I will show you what the component parts of man are. There is so much water, so much lime, so much sugar, so much starch." Over sixteen ingredients he enumerated which go to make up a man, and which he said could be seen in bottles in the museum. "Where, then, does the soul come in?" The minister looked at him and said: "Excuse me, but I must decline to continue the argument any further." "That

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is just like you believers," said the man, "when you cannot meet an argument fairly and squarely, you throw up the sponge and wont have anything more to do with it." "That is certainly not the reason. I am a reasonable man, and as a reasonable man I must refuse to carry on a conversation with so many quarts of water, so much phosphorous, so much starch, so much lime, so much of these ingredients of which you are made." I think you will agree that the minister had the best of the argument. There is in man spirit as well as substance.

The same may be said concerning all life. You grasp an iron ball and call it hard. In reality it is not the iron that is hard but a cohesive force that packs the iron into intense sociability. Let that force abate and the ball becomes like mush. Let it disappear and it becomes a heap of dust that scatters before your breath. There is a forest giant, judged by the sight and senses it is made up of a number of cords of woody and moist substance that go

The Spirit of a Man

to make it heavy. But in it there is a strange spirit essence that causes the roots to gather nourishment from the soil; that weaves the bark and glues it to the stem; that lifts its tons of matter into the air in spite of the constant tug of gravitation. So there is in man the spirit that is gentle or harsh, true or false, tainted or pure, cold or warm. This, too, can be cultivated. As iron sharpeneth iron, so man his brother. Here again life in the presence of the Master Himself will strengthen His spirit within us.

This insistence in the perfected individual is not a plea for sameness in human nature. There is a difference between symmetry and sameness. A row of houses on the side of the street are built the same, door for door, window for window, decoration for decoration. They present to your mind not the idea of symmetry, but sameness. In the forest each tree is perfect, symmetrical, but as you stand in the woods, what an infinite variety in droop and swing and appearance.

CHAPTER V.

THE LENGTH, BREADTH AND HEIGHT OF A MAN.

There must further be a proportional development of life in its threefold relationship. The Rev. C. H. Morrison, referring to the description of the New Jerusalem as given in Revelation—"The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal"—says that it is impossible for us to picture it. Are we to carry its walls up to an infinite height, or sink its foundations down to an incredible depth? Which ever way we take it there is difficulty, and in explanation he says: "John may be speaking of the city here, but he is really thinking of the citizens." Their lives must run out in the length of an eternal purpose, and broaden out into an undreamed of height in the faith and love of God, and these three must be equal.

For himself man must have a high

Length, Breadth and Height of a Man

ideal. "Lowest of all," says Dwight L. Hillis in a classical passage, "is that great underclass of pulseless men content to creep without any thought of wings for rising. Men drifters are they, creatures of circumstance, indifferently remaining where birth or events have started them; having food and raiment, therewith they are content. No inspirations fire them, no ideals rebuke their vulgar contentment, like dead leaves swept forward upon the current, these men drift through life, not really bad, they are indifferently good and thus they form the material out of which bad men are made. In malarial regions physicians say men of overflowing health are safe, because the abounding vitality within crowds back the poison in the outer air, while men who live on the border line between good health and ill furnish the condition for fevers that consume away the life. Similarly men who live an indifferent, supine life with no impulses upward are exposed to evil

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and become a constant menace to society." To some men there come occasional luminous hours. Then their souls revolt against every evil thought and thing. Then do they long for all that is pure and holy and Christlike in character. What heroes they are! With what fortitude do they bear up under blows when the battle is still in the future, but like the bow arching the black cloud, or the sunset splendor, the pictures of glory and grandeur there conceived suddenly disappear.

But he is the strong man who is able to transmute his ideals into character and conduct; who builds his thoughts and deeds into a well-conceived life plan.

How frequently in this materialistic age, when self is the centre of so much activity, do you see a man resolute, determined, pushing. He sees his goal far off and makes for it, but he lacks breadth, that broad and kindly brotherhood of heart that makes life like a sweet song day by day. Two words might fit-

Length, Breadth and Height of a Man

tingly characterize a man's duty toward his fellows, namely, conviction and sympathy.

Why in business are articles adulterated or branded with a lie? Why are assignments made from choice and not of necessity? Why on one hand is there a determined effort to sell nothing for something, and on the other to buy something for nothing? Why is so much of the business world honeycombed with insincerity? Because there is no conviction.

Why is it that our political life is said "to need a hypodermic injection of common honesty?" Why is the will of the people frustrated by ballot-box stuffing, and other pernicious practices? Why are laws made sometimes for other considerations than the people's good? There is no depth of conviction.

Why has the white lie of society become notorious? Why is it that society abounds in hospitalities that lack the warmth of genuine welcome? There is no conviction.

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Why is the Church to-day so often ridiculed because of the inconsistencies of its members? Why is there such a marked difference between our Sunday profession and our Monday practice? Why have we divorced the sacred from the secular? There is no conviction.

But sympathy is also needed. Heart helpfulness is to enter into the fundamental conceptions of our living. There is a great cliff rising sheer out of the plain hundreds of feet. On the side of the cliff a stunted bush is growing apparently out of the crevices of the rock. On the bush a bird sits and swings and sings. The cliff echoes the song of the bird. Now and then the clouds rush rapidly together, the lightning flashes, the thunder rolls, the cliff echoes the roar of the storm. Like that should each life be, strong to respond to the life of the strong—so tender and sympathetic that it will echo the cry of the little child.

How often have you seen a man sympathetic, generous, with infinite

Length, Breadth and Height of a Man

capacity for kindness, in whose character you feel the presence of an imperious will, but he lacked that childlike confidence in God which distinguishes the Christian man. For some time you have been climbing a difficult mountain trail, at last you have reached the top, there is a little earth there, only a little that has crumbled into the fissures of the rock. You say to yourself, any tree would need better nourishment than this affords, but right there by your side there towers a tree high into the air. See how its roots run out here and there, clasp the rock around in search of nourishment. It is a difficult place to grow, but it is a brave pine and it will grow and do its best where nature has placed it. A man needs that peaceful confidence in God that will enable him to grow and do his best where God has put him.

As men and women are, history is a wonderful drama, with moral and spiritual truth running through it all. Slowly it comes out, bit by bit,

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as the drama unfolds. You and I act in this drama, but not as the same character. Shylock alone demanding his pound of flesh, or uttering miserly words over his bond, could not be the Merchant of Venice, Portia, Jessica, Lorenzo are needed. Each of us has a part to play in this drama which no other one can play. It is for each to do his part with all his powers so symmetrically unfolded that he can do the one thing in which his perfected individuality consists—sound one full note in the universal harmony.

PART III.

Our Part in the Great Chorus

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CHAPTER I.

OUR COMPLEX RELATIONSHIPS.

It is the mission of music to soften and remove the asperities of life. It helps to unify the race and make men homogeneous. Sectarianism slinks into hiding places of shame as Charles Wesley, a Methodist, sings "Jesus Lover of my Soul," and Toplady, a Calvinist, "Rock of Ages," and Sarah Adams, a Unitarian, "Nearer my God to Thee," and Whittier, a Quaker, "The Eternal Goodness," and Faber, a Roman Catholic, "There's a Wideness in God's Mercy," and Dodderidge, a Baptist, "O! Happy Day." To-day these well-known hymns are sung by all and claimed by all. In spite of controversy and unbelief, the music of the Christian church is doing much to make it easy for men of

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differing temperaments and beliefs to live together in smooth and harmonious relationships.

It was never easy to live a hermit life. To-day it is impossible. The railroads, the steamship, the telephone, the telegraph, wireless telegraphy, and the many methods of easy, swift, and complete communication have bridged the oceans, united the continents and brought the ends of the earth face to face. Now, as never before, "No man liveth unto himself, and no man dieth unto himself." To-day, as has been so beautifully said, "Man stands at the centre of a number of concentric circles. About him sweeps the home circle. His immediate neighborhood relations describe a circle larger still; then come his relations to the community in general, while beyond the horizon is a circle of influence that includes the world at large. When the tiny spider standing at the centre of its wide-spreading and intricate web, woven for destruction, chances to touch any thread of the

Our Complex Relationships

web, immediately that thread vibrates to the uttermost extremity. And man stands at the centre of a vast web of wide-reaching influence, woven not for blighting but for blessing, and every one of these out-running lines, whether related to friends near by or citizens far off, thrills and vibrates with secret influence; and there is no creature in God's universe so taxed as man, having a thousand dangers to avoid and fulfilling ten thousand duties."

The essential ideal of socialism is that the individual is submerged in the community, and the whole is more important than a single part. There is, of course, an element of truth in this philosophy. The truth attempted and aimed at is but the shadow of the greater truth that runs through the whole system of nature and the whole plan of redemption. This truth was voiced by a modern poet:

God never made an independent man,
It would mar the concord of His perfect
plan.

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The problem of the Christian is to live to-day in the complex relations of life, justly and charitably, so as to remove and not to multiply life's asperities.

CHAPTER II.

THE FACT OF INFLUENCE.

Mutual dependence and influence is thus the law of the universe. A man may seem to be as isolated as a ship in the midst of the Atlantic, yet the waves which that ship generates from shore to shore is only an image of his ever-widening shoreless sea of influence. We are constantly forming character, shaping conduct, and deciding destiny for one another. Man is a free agent, but his will is swayed by motives, and these motives may originate outside of himself. Thus one may rule the will of his neighbor and determine the choice he will make under certain circumstances. The criminal is not the only one responsible for the crime he has committed. Society has helped to make him what he is, and it must shoulder its share of the blame. He has suffered through

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heredity and environment—through the influence of others on him. Society has helped to move the hand that commits the deed. The hero is not to have all the credit for his goodness. Society has helped to make him what he is. Heredity, environment, and the influence of others on him have contributed their share to that which shows its face when the saint unveils.

Influence is irrevocable. You may change your will, your business, your residence, your nationality, but you cannot change those whom you have helped to change. The murderer who fired the fatal shot may repent, but that does not dam the deadly breach through which the life-blood is flowing. The merchant who taught the youth to tell his first mercantile lie may repent, but he cannot, repent for the youth who somewhere in this great world, is duplicating and re-duplicating and extending his influence.

We have frequently—perhaps not too frequently—been reminded that

The Fact of Influence

man's atmosphere is potent to blight and shrivel, but we need to remind ourselves that it is equally potent to build up and fructify. An English author has given to us the life of a London apple-woman. Events had appointed her to poverty, hunger, cold, and two rooms in an attic. But there were three boys sleeping in an ash-box whose lot was harder. She dedicated her life to the little waifs. During two and forty years she mothered and reared some twenty orphans. She taught them all she knew, helped some to secure trades, others to emigrate to the United States and Canada. The author says she had misshapen features, but an exquisite smile was on her hardened face. Someone has added it must have been so, for she had a beautiful soul, as Emerson said of Longfellow. English reform has felt her influence. "Like a beautiful vase exhaling perfume, her influence shall sweeten literature for thousands of years after we are gone."

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A German musician, exquisitely sensitive to harmony, but a day or two landed in our country and utterly ignorant of our language, was attracted into a church he was passing by the sound of singing. The singing he found was execrable—a nasal psalmody, in which everyone was making discord. He could not cover his ears; it was discourteous to go out, “so I resolved,” he says, “to endure the torment with the best fortitude I could assume, when I distinguished, amid the din, the soft, clear voice of a woman singing in perfect time. She made no effort to drown the voices of her companions, neither was she disturbed by their noisy discords; patiently and sweetly she sang in full, rich tones. One after another yielded to the gentle influence, and before the tune was finished all were in perfect harmony.” So may a patient, clear, strong life influence the life-chorus.

CHAPTER III.

THE ART OF LIVING WITH MEN.

Dr. Miller, in one of his most helpful devotional booklets, says "that it is one thing for a singer to sing a solo; there are no voices to wait for, to hurry after, to harmonize or blend with; he may sing at his own sweet will if he but sing expressively and in harmonious proportions. It is quite another thing for a number of persons to sing in choir or chorus. It is necessary, in the latter case, that they should all have the same key; that they should sing carefully and unselfishly, each watching the others and controlling, repressing, or restraining his own voice for the sake of the effect of the whole full music. If one sings falsely, out of tune or out of time, he mars the harmony of the chorus. If he sings without regard to the other voices only for the display of

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his own, his part is out of proportion, and the effect is unhappy." Similarly, some people are very good alone, where no other life comes in contact with theirs, who yet make a wretched business of living when they come into relations with others. They are selfish, tyrannical, despotic. They will not brook suggestion. They will not give in or endure. They will not sacrifice their convenience or prejudice. They make bull-notes in the life chorus.

There are many things that make it difficult for us to live in smooth and harmonious relations with our fellows. The very existence of evil makes the problem intricate. Integrity can never be good friends with iniquity, liberty with tyranny, or purity with filth. Paul, the author of the New Testament ode on love, was always at war with Nero. John, the loving disciple, was never at peace with Herod. There is only one attitude that refined and intelligent men can take toward wickedness in this world and that is an atti-

The Art of Living with Men

tude of uncompromising hostility. Languid manhood may endure great wrongs for the sake of peace, but robust manhood never. When the youth whose name was to go down into history as "Lincoln, the greatest of Americans," first beheld the horrors of slavery in the New Orleans slave market he said: "If ever I have an opportunity, I'll strike that thing and kill it!" When Sir Thomas Moore, whose signal ability placed him on the topmost rung as the King's most trusted adviser, was confronted with the King's lust that demanded that his marriage with Catherine be recognized as illegal, he stood fast, and the power of an infuriated monarchy was impotent in the presence of one man's conscience. There is room in the world to-day for men who do not try to overcome deviltry by diplomacy; who will not garnish sin; who do not seek to be good friends with iniquity; men who will not bend low, like the willow, to every breeze, but, like the oak, will stand stiff in the tempest; men who,

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like yonder mountains, will lift their calm faces to the silent stars, defiant of the bluff of storm. Such men will find themselves engaged in an unrelenting warfare. Winning the grateful affection of many, they will gain the undying hatred of others. You have read of the tombstone that bears this inscription, "He never had an enemy." If the man ever lived upon whose tombstone such words might be truthfully written, they stand as a monument to his eternal disgrace. In a wicked world only men who have allowed their sensibility to what is right or beautiful to be numbed or deadened can be friends with everybody.

The inequalities that exist among men increase the difficulty of right living. "The common talk about equality is all hubble-blowing." Apart from the fact that we are all alike God's children, we are not born equal or gifted equally. We are born with an amazing and sometimes an awful diversity of mental and bodily powers—clever or dull, feeble

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as cripples or abounding in energy, capable of only the lowest work or fit for works of genius—and no contrivances can make men equal. Though you were to proclaim equality by a thousand acts of parliament, you would not make it a fact or induce the world to believe it; and, though you were to employ all the machinery which human law and wit could devise to chain men down to the same level, the inequalities would assert themselves—the strong would get to the front and the weak would be left in the rear. In spite of all your efforts, there would be diversity of rewards. So it is that men frequently stand over against each other in hostile camps, and there is envy and jealousy and secret hatred.

Denominational rivalry has further complicated our difficulty. The various denominations have been compared to the divisions in an army. They are all needed—the cavalry for sudden onslaughts, the artillery for their thundering balls, the infantry for close-range fight-

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ing, the sharpshooters to pick off the men from the guns. Thus in the great battle of love with hatred, purity with falsehood, the various denominations, with their emphasis upon different truths, have all been needed. But from the days of our Lord, when, as Beecher said, a Samaritan was enough to make a Jew swear at any time, even in the midst of public worship, until to-day, when every sect has some other sect which it regards as the scum of the earth, upon which it heaps all the epithets of dislike and terms of contumely which it can command, we have seen, again and again, the divisions of the Christian army attacking each other, stirring up strife and enmity, instead of using all their courage and resource in repelling the attacks of hostile forces and in carrying the campaign into the capital of the enemy's country. Ever loyal to our convictions of truth, we may at the same time be charitable and kind to those

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who differ from us in the interpretation of the revealed Word.

Ambition and the consequent clashing of interests also mitigates against smooth living. The age offers powerful stimulants to ambition. The field is open to all, and the rewards are great; contentment is the exception, aspiration is universal. "An American merchant," says Dwight L. Hillis, "lives more in a year than an Oriental in eighty years; more in an hour than an Indian merchant in twenty-four." The youth of to-day finds every pathway open, and is told that there is not a position of honor, trust, and influence but what is waiting to be filled by him—that there is not a station in the social circle, in the domestic sphere, in the field of intelligence but is waiting for him to give it its future tone and character. The result is that the individual finds himself competing with all the rest of the nation.

In politics, coveting national honors, men spend months in laying

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out a great campaign. Organizations, with their ramifications extending into the remotest parts of the country, are perfected; two plumed knights meet each other in the political arena; one is vanquished, one is victorious. In commerce the strife is not less fierce. "If to-morrow," says the brilliant successor of Henry Ward Beecher, "conflict and strife should spring up in each garden; if the rose should strike its thorn into the honeysuckle; if the violet, from its lowly sphere, should fling mire upon the lily's whiteness; if the wheat should lift up its stalk to beat the barley; if the robin should become jealous of the lark's sweet voice, and the oriole organize a campaign for exterminating the thrush, we should have a conflict in nature that would answer to the strife and warfare in society. Under such circumstances it is not easy to live smoothly and charitably. But, having mastered the winds and the rivers; having taken the sting out of the thunder-

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bolt and made it harmless so that to-day, by reason of the electric bulb, literally the night shineth as the day; having photographed by means of the dark X-rays the bone incased in the flesh and the coin contained in the purse, surely man, by the grace of God, may conquer the envy and hatred of his own heart, and live peaceably and helpfully with his friends and neighbors.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PERFECT MODEL.

A sculptor, wishing to carve a perfect statue, must secure a number of models. One will have the noble brow, another the aquiline nose, another the chiselled lips, another the rounded chin, another the marble arm, and, sweeping these into one he produces that marvel of art before which the world is spell-bound. But he who would live the harmonious life has one perfect model in the man of Nazareth. He alone mastered the science of right living. By a wise use of rest, in communion with His Father, He was enabled, even amidst the intense activity of His driven life, to keep the strings of His being to concert pitch. He was a perfectly developed individual. Most of us grew up without ever thinking about the

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physique of Jesus. Was He strong? Was He athletic? Would He attract attention in a crowd for His physical beauty? Such questions would have seemed to the teachers of our childhood well nigh sacrilegious. There is, however, sufficient in the Gospel to give them definite and affirmative answers. He lived out of doors. He knew the drama of the seasons, the song of the stars. He loved the sea, and to wrestle with it in the storm. He climbed the mountains and looked upon the wild things that dwelt in their darkness. He loved the shock of the plunge in the pool. He knew the touch of the hammer, the plough, and the oar. His hands were big. His arms were strong.

He was strong in intellect. It is true He never wrote a book, but He caused numberless books to be written. He never painted a picture, but His face is seen in every gallery. He took the old, dead laws of the Pharisees and, breathing into them of His creative power, they became

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a gospel. He was good—"Which of you convinceth me of sin?" He only dared to challenge, and the only answer the world could give was worship for the sinless one. In the threefold relations of life He revealed only perfect symmetry and proportion. The outreach of His life toward Calvary, in anticipation of the hour when "I, if I be lifted up from the world, will draw all men unto me" was equal to the breadth of His sympathy and love for the sinful woman, the leper beyond the gate, the sick and the sorrowing, and to the height of His faith in God, culminating in those impressive words: "Nevertheless not my will, but thine be done."

A student of art, weary and discouraged, threw down his brush and went out for some recreation. When he came back he found sweeping around his picture a perfect circle, a most difficult thing to do. Surprised and baffled, he could only exclaim: "The Master has been here!" That is what the world must say as.

The Perfect Model

amidst all the sin and brokenness and straining attempt and moral defeat in the world since Adam, there gleams the perfect circle of the sinless life. He is our perfect model.

